

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - November 4, 2005

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced the sentencing in United States District Court in San Diego today of a Colombian national on drug trafficking charges. The Honorable Barry Ted Moskowitz sentenced defendant Jose Rebolledo-Estupinan to 168 months in custody and 5 years supervised release, based on his conviction at trial of one count of conspiracy to possess 2,245 kilograms/4,939 pounds of cocaine with intent to distribute on board a vessel and one count of possession of cocaine (2,245 kilograms/4,939 pounds) with intent to distribute on board a vessel.

Five other defendants in this case were previously sentenced, Luis Ferne Olave-Valencia was sentenced to 180 months' imprisonment and 5 years of supervised release, Aquilino Bonilla-Torres was sentenced to 168 months' imprisonment and 5 years of supervised release, Sofonias Riascos-Riascos was sentenced to 151 months' imprisonment and 5 years of supervised release, Jose Elvi Mosquera was sentenced to 180 months' imprisonment and 5 years of supervised release, and Rene Chavarin-Carillo was sentenced to 180 months' imprisonment and 5 years of supervised release.

The charges of which defendants were found guilty arose from events that occurred on September 13, 2003. On that day, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton was on patrol in international waters off the coast of Costa Rica. During this patrol, a Customs C-130 aircraft came across a suspected “go-fast” vessel approximately 180 nautical miles from the Hamilton. The “go-fast” had no markings and no flag to indicate registry. The Hamilton launched a helicopter crew and the helicopter crew observed the “go-fast” and a second vessel tied up together for approximately twenty minutes. When the boats separated, the helicopter continued to monitor the “go-fast.” The helicopter crew eventually announced its presence and signaled the “go-fast” crew to stop. A chase ensued, and the Coast Guard helicopter crew observed the “go-fast” crew jettisoning bales over the sides of the boat. Despite signals and commands from the helicopter crew telling the “go-fast” to stop, the crew refused. The “go-fast” crew also ignored warning shots across the bow of the “go-fast.” After a pursuit of approximately five minutes, the helicopter crew successfully disabled the engines of the “go-fast” with gunfire. The Hamilton launched a boarding team and the team picked up 99 bales of contraband floating in the water in the vicinity of the “go-fast.”

This case was a product of the coordinated efforts of the San Diego Maritime Task Force comprised of the United States Coast Guard, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Bureau.

DEFENDANTS

Luis Ferne Olave-Valencia	Rene Al Chavarin-Carrillo
Aquilino Bonilla-Torres	Jose Elvi Mosquera
Jose Rebolledo-Estupinan	Sofonias Riascos-Riascos

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 46, U.S.C., App., Sec 1903(a)(c) and (j) - Conspiracy to possess cocaine with intent to distribute a controlled substance on board a vessel

Title 46, U.S.C., App., Sec. 1903(a), (c)(1)(A) and (f) - Possession of cocaine with intent to distribute on board a vessel and Title 18, U.S.C., App., Sec. 2 - Aiding and abetting

Maximum penalty per count: mandatory minimum term of 10 years to life; fine of \$4,000,000; five years of supervised release.

AGENCIES

U.S. Coast Guard, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement